

Smurfette Principle by Redrikki

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Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Max (Stranger Things)

Relationships: Eleven & Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Max/Lucas Sinclair

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Summary:

There can be more than one girl in the party. El and Max work things out at the Snow Ball.

Smurfette Principle

Max is waiting for Lucas to come back with more punch when a shadow falls across the table. She looks up to find El...Jane... whatever her name is...looming over her. El actually looks like a normal girl for once, wearing a pretty dress without the bloody nose or scary eye makeup.

“Hey.” Max offers a tepid smile. “Mike’s not here.”

“I saw you dancing,” El says with the same weird intensity she brings to pretty much everything as far as Max can tell. “With Lucas.”

“Yeah. So?” Max squirms under the weight of El’s gaze. She’s pretty sure the other girl isn’t going to turn her brain to mush. She hopes so anyway.

“Do you like him?”

“Yeah.” Max can feel a blush spreading across her face like a shadow monster. “I like him a lot.” They kissed or rather she kissed him. She’s fought trans-dimensional monsters, but somehow the kiss feels more unreal.

“And not Mike?” El asks, half-wary, half-hopeful.

Wait, is El jealous? Does she really not get how crazy Mike is about her? Is that why she was such a bitch?

“No,” Max says firmly. The naked relief on El’s face is too painful to look at. “And Mike doesn’t like me either. It’s always—” she swallows hard around the sudden lump in her throat— “it’s always ‘El this, El that.’ He acted like I was trying to replace you. Kept saying I could hang out with them, but I wasn’t part of the party.” Mike’s been a lot less of a jerk since the tunnel and El’s return, but his initial rejection still stings.

“Oh.” El sinks down into an empty seat, a relieved little smile playing around her lips. Glancing over at Max, her smile fades. “Lucas didn’t like me at first.” She looks down at her hands as she fiddles with the

ruffles on her dress. "He thought I was trying to replace Will." Looking back up, she offers an awkward smile. "Boys are stupid."

Girls are pretty stupid too apparently, but Max knows this is the closest thing to an apology she's going to get. "So dumb," she agrees with an exaggerated eye roll.

Cindy Lauper plays over a silence which straddles the line between awkward and companionable. Couples sway out on the dance floor. It's almost like they're normal people. El and Max, two girls at a dance waiting for their boyfriends.

"You are, you know?" El says, still staring out at the dancers.

"I'm what?"

El turns to her. "Part of the party."

The blush is back with a vengeance. Acceptance from a near-stranger shouldn't feel this good. "Yeah," Max says with a laugh. "I'm the zoomer."

"Good." El smiles. "We needed one of those."